

*HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED
AND ITS PREDECESSORS
VOLUME II*

*The History of the University of Cluj-Napoca from
its Foundation to its Successor in Szeged
1872-1921*



his work is a continuation of the first volume of the history of the University of Szeged, founded in 1581, and covers the period from 1872 to 1921, the period of the Royal Hungarian Franz Joseph University. This volume fills a gap when it comes to this area of research. Although numerous studies and partial summaries have been written, no monograph has been published until now. The work summarises the results to date, clarifies and enriches the history of the university with new data based on archival sources, and opens a window on new research directions.

The authors are from Hungary and Transylvania (Kolozsvár, Marosvásárhely). Habil. László Marjanucz, head of department and associate professor, has been appointed editor-in-chief of the volume, while Habil. Tamás Antal, associate professor, and Tamás Vajda, archives director, have been appointed editors. Under the guidance of the editor-in-chief, the editors have prepared the structure of the volume, which is illustrated in the table of contents of the work, together with images and an index of names. The studies have been compiled into a monograph.

The first chapter, *From the Founding to the Naming of the University* (by Zoltán Mariska), looks back at the predecessors of the University of Szeged: the circumstances of the founding and the development of the structure of the university. The history of the foundation has been thoroughly explained by the authors with reference to the relevant sources, clearly explaining the foundation of the university by the state. The founders followed the European model for the structure (four faculties). Since no Faculty of Theology was set up, Faculty of Humanities (Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Languages and Faculty of Sciences) and a Faculty of Sciences (Faculty of Mathematics and Faculty of Sciences) were created alongside the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Medicine. The Faculty of Science was an innovation of the University of Cluj-Napoca, because back then only *Tübingen* had a faculty of science in Europe. At other universities,

for example in Germany and at the university in Budapest and later in Bratislava and Debrecen, sciences were still regarded as “humanities science” in the old tradition and was taught within the Faculty of Humanities (in quite a few departments at the university in Budapest, but only in a few departments in the two universities outside of Budapest).

In the subchapter on the *Employment Systems of the University*, the authors describe the tasks and powers of the various honours and offices, from public professors to servants, which avoided the need to explain particular functions in later chapters. In this way, they helped to connect the whole volume together. The authors have also paid close attention to the generalities of university administration and to the institution itself. In the section entitled *Ten Years of Problems*, issues problems such as the EME, the university library and the Karolina Hospital. These are discussed in detail later on, but not unnecessarily, because they were in some way part of the university’s organisation. The list of the members of the founding faculty is significant, and their names will be mentioned many times in later chapters, for they deserve to be highlighted. The list of the acknowledgements that were gained for good teaching is also important. Some of the professors have also been awarded the title of court councillor and a peerage. I would note that in Austria, although there is no longer an imperial court, civil servants can still be awarded the title ‘*Hofrat*’ (court councillor). Finally, there is a section on the Rector, the Prorector and the Rector’s Office, and the members of the University Council.

The next large section is devoted to the history of the faculties, with a description of the structure of each faculty, its teaching tasks and the academic work of its professors. The part on the Faculty of Law is exemplary, an excellent work (Tamás Antal, Elemér Balogh). The teaching materials, the number of classes, the types of exams are all part of this chapter. The description of the careers of the professors gives colour to the discussion.

The two most populous faculties of the university, in terms of the number of teachers and students, were the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Medicine. Important elements of the latter (Zoltán Mariska) are the numerous comparisons (comparatistics) with the faculty of the university in Budapest and the inclusion of many new data not previously known, based on archival research. As in the case of the Faculty of Law, there are also colourful descriptions of the professors’ careers.

The history of the education of pharmacists is the work of Mária H. Péter, and is related to both the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Science. Lectures were given to pharmacy students in both faculties until 1957. The history of the faculty is a thorough treatment based on both archival data and literature.

The history of the Faculty of Humanities was written by Szilárd Tóth. It shows the departments and the changes that have taken place in them, partly as a result of staff changes and partly as a result of national needs and the development of the disciplines. The ancient world, history, literature and Greek and Latin languages were given a major place in the education of the time.

The History of the Faculty of Mathematics and the Faculty of Sciences (István Hannus – Ferenc Wanek – László Erdélyi) describes the establishment of the faculties, its departments, the careers of its professors and the lives of its students.

The academic work of the faculties, the departments and the professors, is presented in the academic biographies of the professors. As the professors were mainly young, many of them continued their career at other universities, while others were forced to leave after the First World War. Many became internationally renowned scholars. For example, the founders of the flourishing Szeged School of Mathematics, eminent doctors, philosophers and lawyers came from Cluj-Napoca. We will not list their names here, but you can get to know them by reading this volume. Their fate unfolds the academic achievements of the university with opportunities for comparison. The careers of the professors reveal the leading role played by the University of Vienna within the monarchy, not counting the partner countries, followed by Budapest, then Cluj, which achieved great success in a short time, and then Zagreb and Czernowitz. The position is also illustrated by the salary scales. The achievements of individual outstanding professors are still commemorated by plaques, statues and street names throughout the country. The authors are right to mention these memorials in their writings.

György Gaal has made a wholesome work on university buildings, describing the buildings erected previously and their fate, and then discusses the following new buildings in detail: library, main building, clinics, etc., which have given place to the university.

The analysis of the university's society is written by Viktor Karády, setting it in a national and Transylvanian context. He used comparative analysis, which gives a clear picture, showing national and local specificities. The differences between the eastern and western parts of the country are thus clearly noticeable, while the specific features of Transylvania are also strongly present in the writing. The reference to religious affiliation and the mother tongue is very important. One cannot imagine the role that the former played at the time, as well as the differences in the attitudes of the population in the east and west of the country. The author also discusses the impact of the First World War on the university.

The chapter on the *History of Teacher Training and the Training School* is written by Tamás Vajda, who describes the preparation for teaching with comparisons to the university in Budapest.

The chapter on Student Associations and Student Welfare Institutions is written by Zsolt Osváth. It provides a useful overview of the history of student associations in Hungary, and includes a detailed discussion of the history of student associations in Cluj. The volume benefits from this study, providing a number of new data and research results. In addition to the Hungarian ones, this section also deals with the relations with foreign associations. It is fortunate that the author does not forget about the association publications, small press and yearbooks, and takes into account the prominent figures of the University Papers of Cluj-Napoca.

The history of the University Library (Gábor Sipos) is a coherent work, based on a rich literature, which describes the development of the library. In the study “The Relationship between the Transylvanian Museum Association and the University of Cluj-Napoca”, the author, Gábor Sipos, summarizes the complex relationship between the EME and the University, with a look at the history of the Association. The inclusion of this chapter in the volume is essential, because this specific relationship strengthens the character of the University of Cluj.

The chapter on *The Relationship between the University, the City and Transylvania* (Szilárd Toth) is also adds character to the volume. It clearly shows the great influence of the university on the development of the city and the close relationship between the institution and the city. The professors’ role in the urban life is especially interesting, mainly due to the then small-town character of Cluj-Napoca. There are also references to the positive impact of the university on the development of Transylvania. The last two well-written chapters (Károly Vekov, Gábor Vincze), which deal with the expulsion, the move to Pest and the re-establishment in Szeged, are also important parts of the monograph. It is not necessary to take away from them or add to them.

This volume unfolds the detailed history of the university of the period, which is well complemented by photographs. It includes basic information, both general and specific, about the European expansion of the Hungarian university culture, which will help the reader to understand the subject. It contains a considerable amount of useful knowledge, human values, examples, academic achievements and student life events. This volume is highly recommended to read.